/57 cont./

784 2. Pubescent girls must not eat twin fruits, so that they
845 may not conceive twins.

3. The parents of a newborn child must not eat paují
846 meat, because it will make the child turn yellow. Let it
784 be remembered that the paují has a yellow face, very striking in contrast to the extreme blackness of its frizzled crest.

4. The parents of a newborn child must not walk barefoot over rocky or hot sandy places, lest the child should suffer.

5. They must not carry heavy loads either, because the child's neck will become bent and he will suffer from fatigue.

6. They must abstain from sexual relations, since these will produce fever and vomiting in the children.

7. If the father of the newborn should noisily knock down large rocks from high hills, the child will suffer from fright and horrors and will tremble during its sleep.

8. If the father of the newborn cuts certain vines, /58/ his child's navel will become infected or will swell up, depending on whether those vines rot or swell up.

789 The Pemón are not, at the present time, exaggerated in
846 the practice of these observances; they observe them for only a few days and this because of the preachings of their fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law. Then, since they know the charms for each case and each thing to counteract evil influences, they return to ordinary life.

765 122. Another custom, the twin of the couvade and based
753 on the same principle of sympathy or sympathetic influence, is the asarakpué, or observances which must be followed by the relatives of the dead. This is not only observing mourning or showing sadness; they consider themselves infected by the rotting of the corpse of the dead relative and as foci of infection for all they touch.

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765 753 As a result of this they must withdraw from dealing with others; they must not join in to eat other people's food nor offer to others food prepared for them, since they would make them sick, causing them to have stomach-aches, intestinal decomposition, and similar things. I even recall having heard them often attribute to this diarrhea and intestinal worms in children, who are weaker and of more exquisite sensitivity to feel evil influences and vibrations, to say it in one way, sympathetic.

Keep in mind that this infection is not due only nor principally to physical contact with the dead person, but to sympathetic or physio-psychological contact; so that, even at a distance and far away from the dead relative, this will influence equally all his kindred.

[302] In addition to the observances noted above, mourners shave their heads completely and paint themselves with annatto or achiote, but the women are left with a little lock of hair on top.

When one moon or more has passed, those affected by the asarakpué wash themselves, together with all of their implements and clothing, using verbasco lye. And thus they can return to common, everyday life.

[783] It would be too much to say that at present the Pemón Indians observe this with all rigor; against the natural protest of the piaches and the old people, the younger generations are losing these beliefs and customs.

800 Both practices, those of the couvade and those of the asarakpué, are quite similar to the Mosaic legal prescriptions concerning the impurity of parturient women and concerning those who touch corpses; thus it can be seen that in past centuries, when ethnology was still in diapers, there was an attempt to discover by means of these a close link between the Indians and the Jews.

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286 /For further information about changes and continuiti
291 Kamarakoto culture from aboriginal to modern times
301 pp. 273-279./
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Burial.

764 Burial customs are usually very revealing regarding religious beliefs and while those of the Kamarakotos, to the extent that I know them, are less so [128] than usual, they are best mentioned here. Since we were fortunate in that none [24] of the Indians died during our stay, my acquaintance is based on examination of graves[176] and statements of the Indians, checked and weighed as to their [778] reliability. Here the "progressive" policy of a few leaders is having a definite effect and it is necessary carefully to distinguish old custom from present tendencies.

766 A toʔ-esaʔ (head of a household group) is still often buried in his house and probably was invariably so interred in former times. Thus the former owner is buried in the abandoned dwelling at Uruyén and I have indicated his grave on the plan (Fig. 6A). This grave is built up with sticks and mud so that it projects about 50 cm. above the ground and must extend about an equal depth below the surface. The exposed superstructure is rectangular and about one meter square in plan. The body inside is said to be in a crouching position on its haunches, which is concordant with the otherwise peculiar form of the grave. [68] No one but the toʔ-esaʔ is buried in a house and since the house is always abandoned when its master dies anyway, no one lives in a house containing a grave. [69] There is, however, no apparent fear of this grave (or any other) or of the house, which is freely entered if occasion arises.

764 Persons other than a toʔ-esaʔ were not buried in houses but in the open nearby, each inhabited place usually having a patch of sabana that serves as a cemetery, although nothing but the presence of the graves distinguishes it. Everyone was formerly buried in a crouching position, but not in urns or baskets. [178] Now burial in the supine position is common, but this reflects the "progressive" influence. Only one body was, or is, placed in each grave. Sometimes items of personal property are buried with the body but this is neither usual nor obligatory. [268] Most personal property continues in use by other members of the household or, if not immediately needed, is abandoned and may be taken by any comer. Graves outside the house, like that described in a house, were formerly lined and roofed with sticks and mud so that dirt piled on top did not touch the body, but they did not generally protrude above the ground. This lining or roofing is still sometimes provided, but is no longer invariable. Some of the old houses with graves were burned, but this seems to have been rather a casual act or a mere accident from firing the sabanas than a ceremonial duty and certainly is not considered necessary.

765 It was formerly the custom to dig up the bones after an interval of about [178] a year, clean them, and keep them in a chest or basket, but this custom is said to have been entirely abandoned long since and we saw no evidence of it.

176 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 — Analysis]